

MEETING SUMMARY
FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FMAC) MEETING
Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan
2101 Wood Street, Lansing
April 16, 2008
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Lynne M. Boyd, Chair, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Mr. Stephen Shine, Department of Agriculture
Mr. Frank Ruswick, Department of Environmental Quality
Mr. Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club
Dr. Margaret (Peg) Gale, Michigan Tech (via teleconference)
Ms. Amy Spray, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), representing Ms. Erin McDonough

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Mr. Jeffery Pullen, USDA Forest Service, representing Mr. Jerry Bird

FMAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Desmond Jones, Michigan Tree Farm System
Mr. Thomas Dunn, American Motorcyclist Association, District 14
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Mr. Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association
Mr. Thomas Barnes, Michigan Association of Timbermen
Ms. Rachel Kuntzsch, Heart of the Lakes
Mr. George Berghorn, Michigan Forest Products Council
Dr. Daniel Keathley, Michigan State University
Mr. William Manson Jr., Michigan Snowmobile Association
Mr. Joel Blohm, Great Northern Lumber of Michigan
Ms. Susan Holben, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
Mr. Frank Wheatlake, Natural Resources Commission

FMAC ADVISORS ABSENT

Mr. Thomas Ward, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), NRCS

PUBLIC ATTENDEES/GUESTS

Dr. Maureen McDonough, Michigan State University
Mr. Bob McGreavy, Roscommon
Ms. Judy McGreavy, Roscommon
Mr. Ron Easterly, Roscommon County
Mr. Larry Helvie, Crawford
Mr. Brad Garmon, Michigan Environmental Corporation

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Cara Boucher
Mr. Jim Radabaugh
Ms. Kim Korbecki

WELCOME

Chair Boyd called the meeting of the Forest Management Advisory Committee to order at 1:14 p.m. She welcomed all present. She stated there was not a quorum present, so all action items would be carried over to the June 18, 2008 agenda.

Chair Boyd announced Dr. Donna LaCourt has submitted her resignation to the DNR. She has accepted a position with Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). The DNR will be moving as rapidly as possible to fill her vacant position. **Chair Boyd** stated Dr. LaCourt has been a great asset to the DNR and will be missed. Her last day is May 16, 2008.

Chair Boyd stated Mr. Stephen Shine has been appointed to the FMAC to replace Mr. Gordon Wenk; Ms. Amy Spray has submitted her application to the FMAC for appointment to replace Ms. Erin McDonough.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Correction to agenda: Adoption of Meeting Summary, December 5, 2007 changed to February 20, 2008. Adoption of agenda, as amended, could not take place due to the lack of a quorum. A Resolution of "thanks" from the Committee will be prepared and presented to Dr. LaCourt before May 16, 2008.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES; February 20, 2008

Minutes are fine as is, but could not be adopted due to lack of a quorum. The minutes will be moved to the June 18 meeting for adoption.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chair Boyd reported there is a process in the FMAC Bylaws to elect officers. As a quorum was not present, the election of officers will be moved to the June 18, 2008 meeting agenda for action.

Chair Boyd announced that after the election, if she is not Chair of the FMAC, she will still be a member and DNR staff, including Ms. Korbecki, will continue to support the FMAC. She is also planning on having Mr. Kevin Sayers (DNR) attend the meetings to replace Ms. Kerry Gray who left the DNR last month.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Boyd explained to the public present that the FMAC Bylaws state a citizen who has been asked to be placed on the agenda may speak for 5 minutes; those who attend the meeting without being placed on the agenda first may speak for 3 minutes. She opened the meeting for public comment.

Mr. Ron Easterly – Mr. Easterly reported there are approximately 15,000 names on a petition against the DNR clearcutting in their counties. The situation has been getting worse; debris from trees is being left behind and the citizens are still outraged. The tours the FMAC have taken did not cover the places the citizens are complaining about. He reported approximately 38% of businesses in the area are for sale; the clearcutting has hurt tourism and the local economy. He stated they were told about 15 years ago, that stump growth produced trees but as of now there is nothing but bushes. **Chair Boyd** asked the Committee if they had questions for Mr. Easterly.

Mr. Ruswick asked Mr. Easterly if the DNR is clearcutting oak stands; **Mr. Easterly** responded the DNR is mostly cutting oak trees, small as well as larger trees. There is nothing left behind in the area.

Chair Boyd commented that the DNR evaluates 390,000 acres per year, but only harvests about 53,000.

Mr. Helvie stated he understands the five-year projections, but had hoped before the DNR began, they would be select-cutting rather than clearcutting. He provided the Committee several articles regarding the Mason Tract; the DNR, according to Mr. Helvie, has been cutting 150 feet from the AuSable River. In Crawford County, an area 2 miles long of oak growth has been cut.

Mr. Easterly stated the Mason Tract had been donated to the state by a family, with the stipulation it would be used by the people of the state and not touched in any way. **Chair Boyd** corrected his

statement by reporting the Mason Tract was left to the DNR to actively manage for wildlife habitat; it was not left as a "no touch" zone.

Mr. McGreavy gave a rough estimate of 45 square miles the DNR is clearcutting. He felt the DNR needs to, at some point, consider the devastation they are creating, in his opinion for profit, and look at the tourism aspect. **Chair Boyd** asked the Committee if they had any questions or comments for Mr. McGreavy.

Mr. Roberson stated he has heard the same comments many times ("no trees left"). **Chair Boyd** responded the DNR has looked at the sites, compiled information as to what percentage has been clearcut, and provided all information that was requested by the public. She stated there is a public format for all compartment reviews, and hopes they will stay involved in those, as well as the public format for the Regional State Forest Management plans.

Chair Boyd thanked the public for their comments.

Ms. Spray commented perhaps Wildlife would be a better department to answer these questions; successional wildlife requires clearcutting, and is in part why we manage our forests.

Ms. Boucher stated that in the part of the state they are located there is a regeneration issue with oak which is why the DNR has had to clearcut.

Mr. Roberson commented he felt older forests were neglected in the State Forest Management Plan; the language referring to the issues was vague without specificity. He feels specificity of older age classes needs to be clearer. He stated next time a quorum is present at the FMAC meeting he will probably suggest a motion for older class specificity and older age class distribution.

Chair Boyd reiterated the public need to attend the local meetings to discuss the Regional State Forest Management Plan. She again thanked the public for their comments.

CERTIFICATION AUDIT UPDATE

Chair Boyd introduced Ms. Boucher. **Ms. Boucher** reported the DNR 2007 Forest Certification audit for Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) ran October 30 through November 2, 2007. The auditors visited a number of locations in the state. Two reports will be presented; the SFI report is already posted on the DNR website, the FSC final report has not been received but the DNR does have corrective action requests (CARS). The final FSC report will also be posted on the website once received.

Mr. Roberson commented some 2006 CARS were new; did this mean the auditors had changed their minds? **Ms. Boucher** responded that when doing an audit they are taking a snapshot, covering a broad range of things in the annual audit. With audits they tend to find a few things they focus on. All previous CARS were closed and new CARS were opened for 2007, including some continuation of past CARS.

On FSC CARS:

- Prepare and make available, primarily on the DNR website, a precise environmental review process. The DNR has worked on this previously and converted a 30 page document to 16 pages. This document includes information about the compartment review process, and who to contact if there are questions.

Mr. Shine asked how quickly after the audit were the CARS submitted; **Ms. Boucher** responded right at the end of the audit they generally report what the requests will be, although it is not yet finalized.

Chair Boyd stated typically a formal report is provided in approximately a month. **Mr. Shine** questioned if there was a timeline to each CAR; **Ms. Boucher** responded yes; after each are identified, timelines are discussed.

- Must complete and issue the State Forest Management Plan (SFMP) by February 29, 2008, and identify plans for the Regional State Forest Management Plans. The original request was to present to the Natural Resources Commission in February 2008; the FMAC presented a resolution to Director Rebecca A. Humphries, DNR, for an extension of the public review period. The SFMP was approved by Director's action at the April 10 NRC meeting.
- The DNR is currently working on regional state forest management plans and management area concepts; looking at things in a smaller size within ecoregions. The timeline is listed on the website and covers four areas; the Western Upper Peninsula, the Eastern Upper Peninsula, the Northern lower portion of the state, and the Southern lower portion of the state. The plan is to have it completed and ready to go to Director Humphries by January 2009.
- Identify how we have public participation and discuss our process; due by the 2008 audit. The DNR has a number of different public participation processes currently taking place, as an example an advisory team, and two Upper Peninsula teams will be forming. **Dr. Gale** asked if the teams will be made up entirely by DNR staff; **Ms. Boucher** responded the intent is to have a broad range of people, including local participation.
- ORV issues related to ORV damage on state lands and an ORV Management Plan (to be addressed by Mr. Jim Radabaugh, DNR).
- Develop timber harvest guidelines for woody biomass retention procedures. Other states have also received this CAR. **Chair Boyd** stated there is a project, currently ongoing, being funded by the Michigan Forest Finance Authority; this needs to be completed by September 2008. **Ms. Boucher** commented she has attended conferences on this subject and spoke with her counterparts in other states; the DNR is close to having a DRAFT plan ready. She stated she thinks the guidelines will fit in with in-stand retention.

Chair Boyd reported the DNR is scheduling internal audits now in preparation for the external audits that will take place in October 2008.

Mr. Shine commented the State of Michigan forest system has been evaluated in two forest certification systems, which are internationally recognized; would issues being raised today be incorporated in the audit? **Ms. Boucher** responded, yes. **Mr. Shine** asked out of the 50 states, how many have gone through the audit; **Ms. Boucher** responded less than 10. **Mr. Shine** commented it seems with our audit results, the DNR has done quite a job. Discussion ensued.

Chair Boyd stated the auditors hit the whole state. They pick where they are going and the DNR facilitates getting them there. **Ms. Boucher** added it is a systems audit. The auditors will see a variety of sites and present their evaluation of the system. The DNR doesn't always agree with their interpretations. The DNR follows appropriate management based on the objectives they have.

Mr. Roberson commented most management activities move towards objectives even when citizens don't necessarily agree with those objectives.

MICHIGAN STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

Chair Boyd reported Director Humphries approved the SFMP on April 10. It had been presented to the NRC as information only for a month; a resolution for a month extension went to the Director to collect additional public comment.

The major changes made were changing the minimum harvest target to 53,000 acres, which equates to 700,000 to 750,000 cords per year, on a 10-year average. **Mr. Roberson** questioned the need for yearly

targets; **Chair Boyd** responded it came from two areas: MEDC was concerned about new industry in the state that is dependant on the timber production. If they don't know what timber amounts will be coming off state lands, they will be less inclined to bring their business to Michigan. There was also discourse on supporting the Governor's Bio-economy Initiative.

Dr. Gale commented the DNR needs to take into context future desired conditions. **Chair Boyd** agreed. The DNR needs to do a better job of communication; people have a difficult time understanding when they drive by a stand and have no idea know what the goal is. **Chair Boyd** stated the DNR included the minimum amount of harvesting they felt was sustainable. **Ms. Boucher** added this will be reevaluated at a later date; the levels could go up and down as timber is a living resource and can change over time. Although the SFMP says "opportunity to increase", the DNR will evaluate a whole variety of things. **Mr. Ruswick** commented for purposes of transparency, it would be better if the words reflect what the evaluation of harvest levels mean to the DNR.

Ms. Boucher reported there were complaints that the DNR wasn't linking the state forest management plan with the ecoregional plans, and created language to assure that was happening. Ecoregional is across ownerships, and covers state forest land across the state. **Chair Boyd** added the DNR began with the ecoregional plans, and then realized the need for the SFMP. The Southern Lower Peninsula is the lead for developing the ecoregional plan across ownerships.

There was a need to make sure there was a clear interface between the DNR plan and the Governor's Bioeconomy Initiative. **Mr. Roberson** questioned if there was concern about woody biomass having the absolute lowest economic return in the state; he is questioning the return on investment.

Chair Boyd concluded by stating there will be updates to the SFMP with time; it is a living document that will be modified regularly. **Mr. Roberson** asked what the public input process will be for interim changes; **Chair Boyd** responded there was not yet a plan laid out, but any plan modifications will require the Director's signature, so it will be presented to the NRC which is a forum for public comment. **Ms. Boucher** suggested it will most likely go through the networks the DNR already has, i.e. FMAC review, as well as other planning processes. As the DNR works through the changes, they will work through those venues; public comment forums will be included.

IMPROVING PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Boyd introduced Dr. Maureen McDonough, MSU, and stated the FMAC had asked for her to come to present the background on what she has been working on regarding public involvement.

Dr. McDonough stated she was on the faculty of the Department of Forestry at MSU. She is a natural resource sociologist. Her area of research and extension is improving public concept. In her experience, there is a great deal of misunderstanding. She would speak to where public participation is going nationally, and where Michigan should be going in this area.

Dr. McDonough reported it has only been in the last five to eight years that resource management has become more serious about public perception. There is more work towards keeping the public informed, and having them provide feedback. Most natural resources agencies are having difficulty with this process at the present time.

Dr. McDonough commented there is concern regarding sustaining public participation; the agencies have a fear of being overwhelmed as they are already stretched to the limit. There is also a problem with lack of urban involvement, lack of conflict resolution skills and lack of communication skills.

Citizens feel when they participate they should be in on the decision making (management). Traditional public participation has a limited set of methods which tends to be all about the agency; they set up the meeting, set the agenda, and the issues on the agenda are pretty clear on who participates. The diversity of American society is not represented in natural resources; studies all across the country indicated participation is generally older white males, which is a reason to change methods, work on issues of trust, perhaps look at a collaborative process to build-up trust, and become more transparent. **Mr. Roberson** commented there is a pretty severe limit on the number of people who are interested, or can participate, in a collaborative process.

Dr. McDonough stated the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ), the federal agency who advises the White House on environmental issues, did an evaluation last year on public participation. They determined the decision space was too small. **Mr. Ruswick** commented the legal constraints in terms of public participation are drawn too narrowly.

Following is a summary of the presentation by **Dr. McDonough**:

What is public participation?

- A process that brings together diverse people to: define critical issues; develop common goals and objectives; exchange information; formulate proposals for action; and share resources and responsibilities for implementation and evaluation.

Benefits of Effective Participation:

- Conflict is dealt with early; local information is understood; participants understand complexity and diversity; and partnerships and positive relations.

Frustrations:

- Agencies – difficulty sustaining participation; fear of being overwhelmed; and reluctance to give up power.
 - Publics – lack of early involvement.
 - Both – Difficulties with both technical and value information; lack of conflict resolution skills; and lack of appropriate communication skills

Lack of Agreement on Expectations:

- Agency view – collecting information; building support; and public education
- Citizen view – shared decision making

Success at meeting public participation goals:

- Incorporating public values into decisions; improving the substantive quality of decisions; revolving conflict among competing interest; building trust in agencies and institutions; and exchanging information
- Results: public comments and public meeting (low); advisory committees (medium); and collaborative processes (high).

Traditional Public Participation:

- All about the agency (set up the meetings; determine agenda; and controls the process).
- Ask for advice which may or may not be used.

Issues with Traditional Public Participation:

- Who participates; trust; transparency; decision space/legal sideboards; and inappropriate methods.

CEQ Response (October 2007):

- “The full potential for more actively identifying and engaging other Federal, Tribal, State and local agencies, affected and interested parties and the public at large in collaborative environmental analysis and federal decision-making is rarely realized.”

Collaborative Processes Have:

- Diverse voices; mutual learning; flexibility; concern over process, as well as substance; openness and transparency; and trust in the good faith of other participants.

Collaborative Processes are best at:

- Developing trust; perceived legitimacy; and getting people to participate.

In a Collaborative Process:

- People, who have interests in a forest agree to act together to plan, implement and learn from the implementation of their plans; and effective resolution of long-standing issues from examination of mutual interests among competing parties.

Benefits of Collaboration:

- Better understanding and consideration of diverse interests; broader understanding of issues; improved trust; increased opportunities for public input; increased support for the agency; and greater appreciation for land treatments.

Key Characteristics of Successful Collaborative Processes:

- Processes are open, inclusive, and transparent; meetings are civil, safe, and conducive to frank, thoughtful dialogue; deliberations are not rushed; mutual learning occurs among participants; there is an agreed-upon decision-making process; participants share responsibility for the success of the effort; and commitments that are made are honored.

Costs of Collaboration:

- Time – building relationships; and maintaining relationships.
- Training

Are Collaborative Processes Always the Answer?

- Yes – interested parties before they can achieve better outcomes together; willing to invest the time, etc.; support from agency senior management; sufficient decision space among alternatives; and parties will have a continuing relationship.
- Maybe – parties believe they can better achieve outcomes through courts to legislature; ambiguity in agency commitment; serious agreements about data and information; and high level of distrust.

Discussion ensued. **Dr. McDonough** stated she has a set of training materials and will send the web link to Ms. Spray. **Ms. Spray** will send to Ms. Korbecki who will forward to the FMAC.

Mr. Roberson commented the compartment review process is perceived by the public as not open enough, and not being given enough notice. He suggested looking at the cost to do a pilot project at one or two areas; rather than just providing a notice of the compartment reviews, try a collaborative process. **Dr. McDonough** agreed this was a good idea. **Mr. Pullen** stated if the DNR was going to do this, it would have to be done systematically, planning ahead of time, with structure and an evaluation to follow.

Chair Boyd asked the FMAC if they had questions for Dr. McDonough. There were none.

Chair Boyd stated the next agenda item, Process Improvements, would be added to the June 18 agenda, and moved on to the ORV Management Plan.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) MANAGEMENT PLAN

Chair Boyd stated the ORV Management Plan (Plan) was presented at the NRC meeting in March 2008 for information only. She introduced Mr. Jim Radabaugh, DNR.

Mr. Radabaugh explained the DNR manages ORV riding opportunities in the state and national forests. The Plan is an update of the 1979 plan. It was kicked-off in 2004 by hiring MSU to review the plan and offer suggestions for the future. In May 2004, the DNR entered into a contract with MSU to begin the process. They began with open public comment forums in three places in the state, workshops held with 16 different non-profit clubs, meetings with DNR field personnel and the Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Team, surveys, Sheriff Departments and Road Commissioners, and ORV coordinators from 49 different states. MSU then submitted their recommendations.

Mr. Radabaugh reported significant changes began in fall of 2004; forest certification was required by January 2006 which overlapped the planning process. After going through the first certification audit, the DNR received a CAR to correct illegal ORV use. A task force completed recommendations in June of 2006. Recommendations were submitted to the auditors in 2007, which they found sufficient to close the CAR. A new CAR was issued to implement the recommendations of the task force, and incorporate the recommendations into the Plan. The DNR was required to present the new Plan to the NRC by April 2008. Another influence that affected the rewrite of the Plan was when 2005 Public Act 154 was enacted, which required the DNR to expand riding opportunities by 25% or the equivalence of 765 new miles over the next four years. At this time, 96 miles have been added; further expansion is based on availability of staff to do this and willingness of landowners.

The Plan can be found at http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10365_15070---,00.html.

Mr. Radabaugh stated there have been a lot of issues, the most controversial being safety education. Some riders would like mandatory hands-on training in addition to text training. Law Enforcement is the lead on this issue. Law Enforcement's opinion is that training should not be restricted by hands-on training, due to lack of instructors and the need to train as many people as possible.

Mr. Radabaugh reported another controversial subject is Southern Lower Michigan riding opportunities. In 1992, the legislature directed the DNR to create riding opportunities in Southern Lower Michigan. The state-owned lands in Southern Michigan do not include ORV riding; the DNR is currently looking towards partnerships with local units of government and private landowners. The DNR is working with Genesee County in the operation of the Mounds ORV Park, which operates now as a county park. It is a controlled environment.

Mr. Radabaugh discussed the Senate, which is hearing House Bill 4323, an initiative to open all county roads north of US-10 to ORV riding. The bill is very broadly written; it passed the House last year. The Senate is having a hearing at the current time. The DNR has acknowledged this is an initiative and has looked to the Attorney General for guidance. The DNR is willing to work with counties to designate specific areas to get into communities for services. They have encouraged communities to work with the DNR for designation. Some counties have left the decision to individual townships, which has created confusion for riders.

Chair Boyd thanked Mr. Radabaugh.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS:

Meeting date: June 18, 2008

Tentative Location: MUCC, Lansing

Agenda Items:

Red Pine Project

Documentation for age Classes planned, and why

Process Improvements

Election of Officers

Approval of February 20, 2008 FMAC Meeting Minutes (action)

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Boyd adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.